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'The Road to Berlin': Displacement and Cultural Exile in the New Italian Fiction of the Nineties

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The metaphor of 'exile' is a very useful paradigm for exploring the creative impulse of a new body of Italian fiction by a new generation of writers, born in the 1960s, who have already received critical acclaim and success. A recurrent theme of this young narrative¹ is the protagonist's condition of displacement, of not belonging (or of not fully belonging), which operates on a linguistic, structural and cultural level in the texts.

Above all, the language developed by many young writers shows a progressive distancing from the vocabulary and syntax of the standard literary Italian,² and an increasing assimilation of dialecticisms, regionalisms and foreign idioms. This linguistic revolution requires a new competence on the part of the reader who runs the risk of feeling excluded from the style and contents of a mode of writing which does not conform to the expectations suggested by the canon.³ The estrangement of these new authors from the language in which Italian literature has traditionally been written and their 'exile' from their national culture are often left consciously open and unresolved, as attested by their unwillingness to settle for a definitive narrative code.

On the structural level, plots and characters follow narrative patterns of 'exile', the origin of which can be traced back to the youth-journey-flight theme typical of those writers who, born in the 1950s, produced their first narrative works in the early 1980s, such as Enrico Palandri, Andrea De Carlo, Marco Lodoli and, most influentially, Pier Vittorio Tondelli. The link, proposed by Tondelli, between the position of Italian youth and the desire to escape one's place of origin

is adopted also by his young followers, but deromanticised and compelled to show all its ironic contradictions. The 'geographies' of the new narrative of the Nineties, whether their maps are real or imaginary, must be acknowledged and studied in detail by those critics who wish to undertake the interpretation of this fiction, as these geographies reveal how the characters' positions are framed by a constant feeling of non-belonging and by the desire always to be elsewhere. This generates texts which display those elements of rejection and nostalgia which mark the condition of 'exile'. What has emerged, therefore, is both these writers' distance from a specific Italian referential system, and their empathy with foreign cultural and literary models. However, alliances and misalliances are revealed in a dialectic relationship and immediately questioned. The result is a (fictional) condition of 'placelessness' and cultural displacement for both characters and authors, which is also the state of mind of contemporary Italian youth.

In this study, I should like to begin by proposing a flexible definition of 'exile', which draws on Martin Tucker's research on exile writing, but which is integrated into Rosi Braidotti's theory of the 'nomadic subject'. I shall use Tucker's suggestions to identify the forms which the theme of 'exile' has taken in the 1980s (especially by Tondelli) and then proposed again, but critically and ironically, by a younger generation of writers in the 1990s.

Journey and flight are exemplary motifs of the stories written in both decades. Tondelli's *Altri libertini* (Other Libertines, 1980) consists of six short stories which represent the progressive distancing of their protagonists from the alien space of the author's Northern Italian province, and their movement, firstly towards Northern Italian university towns, then on to mythical and idealised metropolis of Northern Europe.⁴ This pattern - the progression from province, to Italian town, to European city, and sometimes to 'America' (by which one should read the USA, but charged with a mythical dimension constructed through literary references and popular culture), - abounds in the fiction of the 1980s, and is reproduced with an ironic twist by many writers of the early 1990s. In order to exemplify my claim that the authors of the 1990s have moved away from Tondelli's model, I shall analyse a short story and a novel by one of the most influential

of these new Italian authors, Silvia Ballestra, which reveal 'exile' as a myth, both at the level of the narrative patterns adopted and in the representation of the characters' condition. Braidotti's discussion of the 'nomadic subject' will help me to give theoretical support to my conclusion that the new Italian fiction is attempting to create an alternative, more positive, perception of youth displacement in narrative.

The term 'exile' should be understood in a wider sense and not only to describe the physical distance of the writers from their native country. As Martin Tucker explains, such a term refers also to the 'profound state of psychic exile' which informs much contemporary narrative.⁵ 'Psychic exile' is the state of the contemporary subject, and the main consequence of 'geographic exile', the loss of one's country, corresponds, on a psychological level, to the postmodern fragmentation of identity. Tucker goes on to distinguish between 'exile', 'voluntary exile' and 'expatriate' writing. All kinds of texts which deal with the question of exile, he explains, are, however, unified by a sense of loss and nostalgia for the native country and the past.⁶ This nostalgia is reflected, in narrative terms, in the recuperation of those traditionally realistic genres (above all, the *Bildungsroman*), which had helped to construct and support a secure sense of identity.⁷ We shall see how this description of exile, and of the nostalgic mood associated with it (which is also nostalgia for traditional narrative forms), apply to the Italian narrative of the 1980s.

In opposition to the nostalgic re-evaluation of the past associated with 'exile' and adopted as a metaphor for the postmodern human condition and its representation, Rosi Braidotti introduces the alternative metaphor of 'nomadism' and of the polyglot as a linguistic nomad.⁸ From her feminist standpoint, Braidotti believes that 'exile' is an insufficient metaphor, because it represents only the displacement of the ungendered and undifferentiated subject of male, white, Eurocentric thought, and, therefore, she warns against the dangers of a feminist appropriation of this restrictive metaphor.⁹ Her nomadic subject, on the contrary, 'does not represent a homeless being, nor the condition of forced displacement [...] it represents the subject who has abandoned all ideas, desire or nostalgia for stability'.¹⁰ Never defined by a single fixed identity, nor by a single fixed place, the

nomad inhabits simultaneously many places and confronts the Other, rather than her/his Self, by taking responsibility for his/her transitions. Nomadic subjects, Braidotti insists, are always aware of the different positions (gender, race, age, nationality, class, etc.) they occupy during every phase of their constant 'travelling', but, at the same time, they are constantly driven on by their desire to transcend the boundaries of each given context.¹¹

In linguistic and narrative terms, the nomad is a fundamental figure of contemporary literature. The nomad's resistance to the dominant culture and its language means at the same time engagement with that culture and constant tension directed against assimilation to a fixed identity. A nomadic writer is a postcolonial writer, who resists every culture she/he decides to confront in a specific time/space, from a specific position. Braidotti's distinctions between 'exile', 'emigrant' and 'nomad' illustrate how this last subject is different from the other two by virtue of her/his engagement with, and resistance to, each culture s/he must confront in time.¹² It is precisely this notion of constant acknowledgement of one's own location, typical of the nomadic subject, that is investigated by the writers of the 1990s. They, like Braidotti, consider the 'exile' metaphor, so pervasive in the works of the previous generation, a restrictive one.

Should native Italian writers, who are starting to work side by side with the first generation of Italian immigrant writers, be called postcolonial, nomadic and/or exiles? How does their work compare with the traditional definition of exile writing, tinted as it is with nostalgia for some lost identity and for a fixed idea of native culture/language, considering that most of them are neither forced nor choose to live physically outside Italy's geographical boundaries? Could the definition 'internal exile' be sufficient to express the new authors' questioning of such boundaries and their experimentation with cultural geography? Or should we call them nomadic writers who have chosen cultural resistance to their own native culture and literary tradition as a means of positioning and repositioning themselves, and of questioning the very idea of nationality? An examination of the way in which the idea of displacement has been deployed in some works in the last twenty years is helpful when trying to answer these questions.

Those critics who have studied the Italian fiction of the 1980s

have highlighted how the recurrent theme of journey-flight is synonymous with the psychological condition of 'exile' experienced by the young protagonists of, for example, Pier Vittorio Tondelli's Altri Libertini, Enrico Palandri's Boccalone (1979), Andrea De Carlo's Treno di panna (1981; The Cream Train, 1987) and Marco Lodoli's Diario di un millennio che fugge (Diary of a Runaway Millennium, 1986).¹³ The critic Fulvio Panzeri suggests that these writers' impulse to write is fuelled by their desire to represent the sense of 'exile' experienced by 1980s Italian youth from their social reality.¹⁴ Generoso Picone suggests that, having missed the chance to act effectively in society after the failure of the 1970s political 'revolution', Italian youth perceive themselves as strangers to the world they must live in.¹⁵ The authors of this generation write outside the two main narrative trends of the 1970s, that is to say, engaged political representation of reality and avantgarde formal experimentation, which, they believe, failed to influence Italian history. They return to more traditional narrative modes, adopting primarily realistic narrative plots, but use them to underline the distance between young characters and their environment. The estrangement from their original places and from themselves does not end, however, when the place of desire is reached, but shifts its target within the characters' souls and is transformed into what Panzeri calls the 'dream of another world', which exists in the space of the subject's desire.¹⁶

Tondelli's work exemplifies the critics' claim that the Italian fiction of his generation is in a permanent state of 'psychic exile', if we want to use the expression proposed by Tucker. It is to be noted that, in compliance with the element of nostalgia and desire for the past typical of exile fiction, Tondelli also introduces and develops the theme of the return to the province, where both characters end their journeys and plots stop. In his collection of essays and occasional writings, Un weekend postmoderno (A Postmodern Weekend, 1990), the last section is dedicated to places and journeys.¹⁷ The tension between personal desire and the condition of constant displacement is reached here by means of a fragmentary construction of the text, in which paragraphs on European metropolis alternate with observations of some provincial town or landscape. This strategy highlights the fact that the character's identity is never fundamentally altered by the places s/he reaches

during her/his journeys, and that the subject's desire always to be elsewhere often corresponds to her/his wish to be at home.

Tondelli's writings present a hierarchy of desired places, which changes with the writer's growing maturity, and in his texts the metaphor of flight is gradually replaced by that of return. This shift is most apparent in the use of language and cultural references. While the linguistic novelty of *Altri libertini* caused disconcert among the readers, because of the great distance the writer had put between his fictional language and standard literary Italian, his attempt to give narrative form to youth jargon was perceived by most critics as a groundbreaking and modernising experiment. They emphasised not so much the estrangement of the new fiction from the Italian tradition, but rather the alienation of that tradition from the communicative modes of Italian youth culture.¹⁸

Tondelli's language is a complex form of Italian which attempts to move beyond national boundaries by quoting idioms, expressions and ideas of other (Anglo-American, cosmopolitan, popular, and media) cultures, as they are perceived by Italian, provincial youth. English, for example, enters the text unmediated, imitating the English pop and rock consumption by young people in Italy, that is to say, mediation is not obtained through paraphrasing or translation, but through the different contexts in which the references appear. This directedness of transnational cultural referentiality is taken yet further by authors of the 1990s, who locate their stories in their elective cultures. For example, Enrico Brizzi sets his *Bastogne* (1996) in a France constructed on Louis Ferdinand Céline's writings, and Isabella Santacroce describes an underground post-punk London in her *Destroy* (1996).¹⁹ Whereas Tondelli had used *one* untranslatable (that is, having no Italian equivalent) English word in the title of his 1990 work *Un weekend postmoderno*, Simone Battig affords his 1987 novel, set in a provincial town of Veneto, the title *Fuck Vitalogy Today*.²⁰ It is left to the readers' linguistic and cultural competence to understand the necessity for the appropriation and appropriateness of the original English titles of both Santacroce's and Battig's works.

The aspiration to be part of a more cosmopolitan cultural scene is the main reason why young Italian writers of the 1980s adopt a position of 'voluntary exile' from their inherited literary tradition. This position

explains their penchant not only for foreign languages and popular culture, but also, as Picone suggests, for alternative high culture models: 'American' beatnik, early 1980s minimalism, Louis Ferdinand Céline, and Italian writers, marginal to the critical canon, who have defined themselves in a cosmopolitan tradition (Antonio Delfini, Tommaso Landolfi, Silvio D'Arzo, Alberto Arbasino).²¹ The ambivalence of their desire for North European and 'American' models is symbolised by the opposite tension to return to Italian literary models. From a linguistic point of view, Tondelli's adoption of a foreign vocabulary is constantly counterbalanced by sentence constructions which are heavily influenced by local dialects. His position can be called romantic, as all the places in his characters' 'exile' are destined to become spaces of nostalgic memory. Most of the stories written by the youngest generation of Italian writers move, however, against such an idealised narrative of exile and lost identity.

Silvia Ballestra, Aldo Nove, Giuseppe Culicchia, Enrico Brizzi, Rossana Campo, Isabella Santacroce, to name but a few of the authors who have followed in the footsteps of Tondelli and his contemporaries, rewrite the 'plot of exile' ironically, that is to say, they consciously foreground the nostalgic and romantic position which lies behind their characters' flight from the national cultural tradition. At the same time they flaunt the writers of the previous generation as literary models, a strategic move that allows them to claim a sense of belonging to a literary tradition. Like those of the 1980s, the young fictional characters of the 1990s desire to be elsewhere than Italy, to read books other than Italian, to speak languages unlike the standard Italian learnt from school textbooks. The idealised view of Northern metropolitan cities is for Ballestra's, Brizzi's, and Culicchia's young protagonists still very strong, but it is revealed as a cultural construction from the beginning. Likewise, flights and formative journeys are no longer subject to the nostalgic dimension of memory, which had been such an important element of Tondelli's works. The focus of the narrator's eye shifts from the strangeness of new places to the extraneity the young characters feel for all places. The inadequacy of the Italian province becomes the inadequacy of the provincial fictional subject to fulfill his (and I use the masculine intentionally, as I hope it will become clear in my conclusions) international aspirations.

Silvia Ballestra's long short story 'La via per Berlino' (The Road to Berlin', 1991), and its 1992 sequel, the novel La guerra degli Antò (Antò's War) best exemplify the elements which are common to her contemporaries.²² They narrate the adventures of Antò Lu Purk, referred to as 'Pescarese punk', and his group of friends, through their youth in Pescara, their university experience in Bologna, their 'formative' (or deformative, as Ballestra likes to call them) journeys through Europe, up to the start of the Gulf war. The definition 'Pescarese punk' is meant ironically to remind the readers of the protagonist's desire to be part of an international youth culture and of the limits his aspirations must face because of his own geographic location. The first chapter, entitled, in the style of traditional formative fiction, 'Un'adolescenza pescarese' ('A Youth in Pescara'), underlines this contradiction: 'Antò Lu Purk was born in Montesilvano, a provincial town near Pescara, in 1969, on the same day as man conquered the moon'.²³ No connection is suggested between the two events if not the disproportion of the comparison. The Italian province where Antò is born cannot be escaped simply by virtue of a narrative link between his date of birth and History: the irony of the sentence is directed both at the character's self-aggrandisement and at the power of fiction to overcome geographical limitations.

The irony of the discrepancy between Antò's birth and the conquering of the moon is further highlighted by the fact that the introduction of the protagonist's impossible *Bildungsroman* can be read as a parody of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's opening of his own autobiography. In Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit (*From My Life: Poetry and Truth*, 1811-14), Goethe makes his birth coincide with the perfect position of the planets in relation to his sign, whereby not only the stars shine benevolently on the poet's coming into the world, but also the possible negative effects of the moon's rays end up bringing positive consequences to Goethe's fellow citizens, in virtue precisely of the writer's birth.²⁴ By constructing her first page on Antò's life (where the individual destiny does not bear any connection with the universe) as a parody of the perfect cosmogony which appears to welcome and include Goethe's own self-presentation, Ballestra succeeds at the same time in showing the limits imposed upon her character's fate by his 'geographical' circumstances, and in revealing

the myth of self-definition inscribed in Goethe's model text of European male autobiography.

After having failed his high school exams, Antò embarks upon the prescriptive 'formative journey in Europe: Berlin-Amsterdam, London-Barcelona'.²⁵ This first flight from Italy, however, is paid for by Antò's parents and the list of cities visited by him remains what the narrator tells us, the ideal away-from-Italy itinerary. The text, thus, contrives to stress the empty superficiality of his motivations for travelling. Back in Italy, Antò invests his desire to be elsewhere in his hope for his student life in Bologna. His failure to meet the challenges of life in the university city leaves Antò bewildered and persuades him of the inadequacy of the Italian scene for his own aspirations. His formative summer journey then acquires in his memory a mythical dimension which, Ballestra's narrator insists, is simply the result of Antò's frustrations and projections:

he decided to burn all his bridges with the peninsular land, resolved that it did not deserve his tears. After all, he had excellent memories of his European tour, particularly of Berlin. All at once he was certain he would find himself a new family in Kreuzberg, the neighbourhood of squatters, punks and Turks. This thought was enough to make him happy.²⁶

Going to Kreuzberg becomes Antò's confused dream, although it is constantly frustrated by his failures at all levels (study, love, work, friendship) during his life in Bologna. Ballestra creates a cruel metaphor of her protagonist's inadequacy through an episode in which, because he is unable to perceive his own limits, Antò falls from a height and must have a leg amputated. He manages nevertheless to leave for Berlin, notwithstanding the fact that his inability to travel is now symbolised by his maimed body.

On the train that takes him to Kreuzberg Ballestra shows her protagonist regretting the fact that he has to miss 'a good film by Craven on the third channel',²⁷ suggesting that his intellectual desire to escape Italy has more to do with media representation of other cultures than with reality. The short story ends sadly and ironically with the complete exposure of Antò's unavowed isolation and lack of familiarity with the city of his dreams: 'When the Teutonic train

conductor came into the compartment to check his ticket, Antò Lu Purk realised that his stop was fast approaching. He could not resist the temptation to explain, in his worst Anglo-Pescarese, that this young one-legged man was perhaps the last true Abruzzi rock, an Italian punk in love with Germany'.²⁸ Antò's linguistic inadequacy acts as a sarcastic comment on the idealised plurilinguism of Tondelli's fiction. The conductor cannot understand what the boy says, because his alleged internationalism is limited by his regional (not even national!) origins, precisely what he is trying to leave behind. Geography, suggests Ballestra, is not easily overcome by the power of narrative imagination: 'before History, before Sociology, what screws us is Geography. Anthropology. Linguistics, even'.²⁹

In *La guerra degli Antò*, which starts where the plot of 'La via per Berlino' had ended, Ballestra insists on the theme of the limits which are imposed upon her young characters by their cultural origins. Berlin, the mythical place of Antò's 'voluntary exile' has already proved a failure (in Antò's mind places fail him, not viceversa). The narrating voice now comments directly on the character's shortcomings. Having been rejected (not surprisingly, as he was unable to communicate with them) by his ideal family of punk and squatters in Kreuzberg, Antò is rhetorically asked by the narrator: 'had you seriously never realised that even punks in Bologna looked down on you and thought you were completely uncool every time you appeared on the horizon?'³⁰ Antò's experience in Berlin, the city which had been the driving desire of the first story, is significantly left outside the narration, so negative it has actually proved for him. The young man is now in Amsterdam, alone and rejected by the city, and, most importantly, missing his friends and family.

In Amsterdam, Antò does not find the dreamt of space of cultural freedom, as it was only a space of his mind, constructed by the suggestions offered by books, films and songs common to his generation. The very motivation for travelling is questioned by the narrator, who wonders why Antò behaves in Amsterdam exactly as he would in his native town. Meanwhile, Antò acquires a mythical aura in the eyes of his Italian friends, ironically becoming a model of 'voluntary exile' for them. In order to explain the reasons which lie behind her young characters' desire to escape their reality, the narrator

describes in detail the limits of the Italian province. History, for example, proves to be beyond political engagement and control, as in the example of the Gulf war. The only possible activism for the young appears to consist of commenting upon media reports about what is decided elsewhere. Political idealism, in the form of rallies against George Bush and 'American' imperialism, is shown to be as ineffective as Antò's attempts to find an ideal family in Kreuzberg.

When one of Antò's friend wrongly believes he has been called up for active military service in the Gulf, he absconds by joining his mythical friend and hero in Amsterdam. The disproportion of his reaction (nobody, in Italy, apart from professional soldiers, was conscripted for this war, which the characters of the novel are able to live only through its media representation) is mirrored by the final failure of the two friends in Amsterdam. In the youth hostel where they are staying, the two men decide to cook spaghetti, in order to celebrate their successful retreat and their nostalgia for Italy, but their ineffectiveness is so complete that this simple act ends up causing a fire which destroys the hostel and both men are sent home in disgrace.

Ballestra's bleak view of young people's desire for 'exile' as a mythical space originates in the limited knowledge that young Italians have of their ideal cultures, in her characters' inability to construct themselves as nomadic subjects who move freely about a postmodern and postcolonial world, subjects who, as Braidotti suggests, should constantly aspire to be elsewhere, but who must at the same time be strongly situated, aware of their position as young (provincial) Italians. Antò's tragedy is precipitated by his denial of the limits (but also advantages, especially in his relatively privileged economic condition, which allows him to undertake his 'formative' journeys) imposed upon him by his geographic location, combined with his inadequate, second-hand preparation of those cultures he has come to idealise. Ballestra's works are exemplary of the fiction of the 1990s, in so far as they represent the need in their fictional characters for a transition in the way they perceive themselves: from romantic heroes, who are escaping a world that does not include them, and from which they 'exile' themselves (and who are ultimately the last embodiment of the traditional *Bildungsroman* heroes of modern European literary tradition), to postmodern subjects, whose identities are in a constant

negotiation with original places (past and present) and new locations (present and future).

Examples of effective nomadic subjects are offered by Silvia Ballestra in her third book, *Gli orsi* (The Bears, 1995), by Rossana Campo in her novels, by Isabella Santacroce in the already mentioned *Destroy*, and by some male writers, mostly through female characters, who appear to be better equipped to deal with an unstable national identity, which is less fixed for them to start with.³¹ The different relation which female and male characters build between their identity and the various spaces they occupy in the fictional geographies created by young Italian writers deserves a deeper analysis, but it can be explained by the authors' perception of the fact that women have historically occupied a more uncertain, and therefore more flexible, position with regard to their (gender) identity. Santacroce's character Misty, for example, can comfortably deal with a dark, socially marginalised London because she is fluent in all the linguistic and cultural codes through which the city communicates (first of all, the English language), but also because, as a woman, she has been obliged to read through the idealised images of the city as they have been proposed through its cultural representations (Antò's agony over the complete disappointment of his sexual liberation dream in Amsterdam, in Ballestra's novel, for example, can be compared with Misty's understanding, negotiation and 'use' of London's sex market in Santacroce's story). The Italian young women who, in Campo's novels, decide (and can afford) to live in Paris as voluntary expatriates, do so with constant awareness of their provenance, with no nostalgia for what they have left behind and no mythical expectations of the city of their sojourn. In fact, they can decide to leave any time and go to 'America' as in Campo's *L'attore americano* (The American Actor, 1997), feeling equally at home and equally strangers in all places. In Enrico Brizzi's first novel and best-seller, *Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo* (1997; *Jack Frusciante Has Left the Band*, 1998), 'exile myth' and 'nomadic subject' are embodied by the two main characters, Alex and his girlfriend Aidi.³² Alex generally perceives his hometown, Bologna, as foreign and romantically dreams of J. D. Salinger and rock bands, but is unable to transcend the boundaries of school yard, family home and neighbourhood. On the contrary, Aidi, unencumbered

by myths, goes to 'America', leaving him behind.

The reason why female characters are more often shaped along the lines of what Braidotti calls a 'situated nomadic subject' more than male ones deserves to be further investigated. This must not be read as a definitive statement on the new Italian fiction, as both male and female characters, of both men and women writers, alternate between positions of 'exile', 'voluntary exile', and 'nomadism'. These positions are becoming increasingly unpredictable, and are destined to change even further when they meet the voices of immigrants to Italy. A few native Italian young writers, such as Giuseppe Caliceti, have already started a dialogue with authors and themes of immigration, pioneering what appears to be one of the most interesting and original directions that will develop in Italian narrative through the new decade.³³ The questioning of traditional Italian linguistic and cultural codes, precipitated by the emergence of many 'exiled' positions (youth, woman, poor, immigrant), are potentially very rich and exciting. In terms of narrative, this could, in the long run, lead to the creation of fictional subjects who attempt to transcend their 'exile' by exploring and assuming a nomadic identity. For the moment, though, Italian writers are mostly directing their narrative efforts towards the liberation of their characters from the limits imposed upon them by the flight and return myths.

NOTES

I am thankful to Adalgisa Giorgio for her comments on the first draft of this paper. All translations which have not been published in English are by the author.

¹ For an overview of the controversy raised by these narratives see Claudia Bernardi, 'Pulp and Other Fictions: Critical Debate on the new Italian Narrative', *Bulletin of the Society for Italian Studies* (1997), 30, 4-11. Among the Italian accounts, see Raffaele Cardone, Franco Galato, Fulvio Panzeri (eds.), *Altre storie. Inventario della nuova narrativa italiana fra anni '80 e '90* (Other Stories: an Inventory of the New Italian Fiction in the 1980s and 1990s); (Milan, Marcos y Marcos, 1996); Filippo La Porta, *La nuova narrativa italiana. Travestimenti e stili di fine secolo* (New Italian Fiction: Disguises and Styles at the End of the Century); (Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1995); Generoso Picone,

Fulvio Panzeri, Massimo Raffaelli, Angelo Ferracuti (eds.), Paesaggi italiani (Italian Landscapes); (Ancona, Transeuropa, 1994); and Marino Sinibaldi, Pulp. La letteratura nell'era della simultaneità (Pulp, Literature in the Age of Simultaneity); (Rome, Donzelli, 1997).

² On 'standard literary Italian', see Lino Pertile, 'The Italian Novel Today: Politics, Language, Literature', in The New Italian Novel, ed. by Zygmunt G. Baranski, Lino Pertile (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp.1-19.

³ The need for a specific linguistic competence has been pointed out by Severino Cesari, 'Narratori dell'eccesso', La bestia: narrative invaders! ('The Narrators of Excess', The Beast: Narrative Invaders!) (1997), 1/1, 24-36 (28-29).

⁴ Pier Vittorio Tondelli, Altri Libertini (Other Libertines; Milan, Feltrinelli, 1980)

⁵ Martin Tucker (ed.), 'Preface' to Literary Exile in the Twentieth Century: an Analysis and Biographical Dictionary (New York-London, Greenwood Press, 1991), pp.vii-xii (p.vii).

⁶ Ibid., p.ix.

⁷ Ibid., pp.ix-x.

⁸ Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory (New York, Columbia University Press, 1994), p.10. [Translated by Anna Maria Crispino and Tina D'Agostini as Soggetto nomade. Femminismo e crisi della modernità. A cura di Anna Maria Crispino (Rome, Donzelli, 1994), p.14].

⁹ Braidotti, p.21 [p.267].

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.22-23 [pp.27-28].

¹¹ Ibid., p.36 [p.42]

¹² Ibid., pp.21-28 [pp.26-34].

¹³ Enrico Palandri, Boccalone. Storia vera piena di bugie (Boccalone: a True Story Full of Lies) (Milan, Bompiani, 1997 [1979]); Andrea De Carlo, Treno di panna (Turin, Einaudi, 1981). [Translated by John Gaty as The Cream Train (London, Olive Press, 1987)]; Marco Lodoli, Diario di un millennio che fugge (Diary of a Runaway Millennium) (Milan, Theoria, 1986).

¹⁴ Panzeri, 'Il paesaggio come tentazione' ('The Landscape as a Temptation'), in Picone, Panzeri, Raffaelli, Ferracuti (eds.), pp.67-102 (p.86).

¹⁵ Picone, 'Ipotesi critiche per la lettura di un'onda' ('Critical Ipotesis for the Reading of a New Wave'), in Picone, Panzeri, Raffaelli, Ferracuti (eds.), pp.15-65 (pp.33-36).

¹⁶ Panzeri, 'Il paesaggio come tentazione', p.86.

¹⁷ Pier Vittorio Tondelli, Un week-end postmoderno (A Postmodern Weekend) (Milan, Bompiani, 1996 [1990]). The chapters are entitled 'Viaggi' ('Journeys', pp.372-457), and 'Geografia letteraria' ('Literary Geography', pp.459-593).

¹⁸ See Fulvio Panzeri and Generoso Picone, Pier Vittorio Tondelli: il mestiere di scrittore. Un libro intervista (Pier Vittorio Tondelli: a Writer's Job. An Interview-Book) (Rome-Naples, Theoria, 1997), pp.98-106.

¹⁹ Enrico Brizzi, Bastogne (Milan, Baldini e Castoldi, 1996); Isabella Santacroce, Destroy (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1996).

Enrico Brizzi's admiration for Louis Ferdinand Céline's writings is such as to lead him to quote the French author directly and profusely in Bastogne. Brizzi and some of his contemporaries find inspiration in Céline's description of violent 'lowlife', but also in his linguistic experimentation aimed at reproducing oral speech and at distancing literary language from traditional literary forms (See Renato Barilli, 'Ricerche e la narrativa nuova-nuova', La bestia: narrative invaders! ('Ricerche and the New-New Fiction', The Beast: Narrative Invaders!) (1997), 1/1, 8-18 (14-15).

²⁰ Simone Battig, Fuck Vitalogy Today (Rome-Naples, Theoria, 1997).

²¹ Picone, 'Ipotesi critiche per la lettura di un'onda', pp.45-46.

²² Silvia Ballestra, 'La via per Berlino', in Compleanno dell'iguana ('The Road to Berlin', in The Iguana's Birthday) (Milan, Mondadori, 1991), pp.8-103; La guerra degli Antò (Antò's War) (Milan, Mondadori, 1992). The two texts have been published together as Il disastro degli Antò (Antò's Catastrophe) (Milan, Baldini e Castoldi, 1997). For La guerra degli Antò I will be referring to the 1997 edition.

²³ Ballestra, 'La via per Berlino', p.9.

²⁴ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit (Frankfurt, Insel, 1970), p.11. [Translated by Robert R. Heitner as From My Life: Poetry and Truth (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994)].

I am thankful to Franziska Meyer for drawing my attention to the similarities between Ballestra's and Goethe's opening pages.

²⁵ Ballestra, 'La via per Berlino', p.28.

²⁶ Ibid., pp.45-46.

²⁷ Ibid., pp.100-101.

²⁸ Ibid., p.101.

²⁹ Ballestra, Il disastro degli Antò, p.320.

³⁰ Ibid., p.101.

³¹ Silvia Ballestra, Gli orsi (The Bears) (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1995); Rossana Campo, In principio erano le mutande (In the Beginning There Were Knickers) (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1992), Il pieno di super (A Full Tank) (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1993), Mai sentita così bene (Never Felt Better) (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1995), L'attore americano (The American Actor) (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1997).

³² Enrico Brizzi, Jack Frusciante è uscito dal gruppo (Ancona, Transeuropa, 1997). [Translated by Stash Luczkiw as Jack Frusciante Has Left the Band, London, Flamingo, 1998].

³³ Giuseppe Caliceti, Marocchino! Storie italiane di bambini stranieri (Marocchino! Italian Stories of Foreign Children) (Trieste, Edizioni E. Elle, 1994); Rachid, un bambino arabo in Italia (Rachid, an Arabian Boy in Italy) (Turin, Einaudi, 1995).